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My Ships

Randolph

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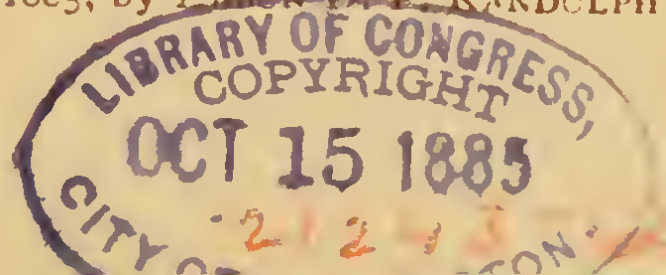

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I.

AH, years ago!—no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky,
I dreamed of days, perhaps remote,
Where ships of mine that were afloat,
Should in the harbor lie,
And all the costly freights they bore
Enrich me both in mind and store.

WHAT dreams they were of Argosies
Laden in many a clime;
So stoutly built, so bravely manned,
No fear but they would come to land
At their appointed time;
And I should see them, one by one,
Close furl their sails in summer's sun.

AND then, while men in wonder stood,
My ships I would unlade;
My treasures vast they should behold,
And to my learning or my gold
What honors would be paid!
And though the years might come and go,
I could but wiser, richer grow.

II.

IN later years,—no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky,
I saw the dreams of days remote
Fade out, and ships that were afloat,
As drifting wrecks go by:
And all the many freights they bore
Lay fathoms deep, or strewed the shore!

WHILE ships of which I never thought,
Were sailing o'er the sea;
And one by one, with costlier lade,
In safety all the voyage made,
And brought their freights to me;
What I had lost but trifle seemed,
And I was richer than I dreamed!

NO wondering crowd, with envious eye,
Looked on my treasure rare;
Yet they were weightier far than gold;
They still increase, though I grow old,
And are beyond compare:
Would all the restless hearts I see
Had ships like these that came to me!

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